

Trends and Performance Outcomes in Residential and Shelter Services FY02 – FY05

This report summarizes FY02 through FY05 trends and performance outcomes in contracted residential and emergency shelter services of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The period covered in this report is subsequent to the increase in funds allocated in FY01 and FY02 by the Rhode Island legislature pursuant to statute Section 42-72-29.1.

KEY FINDINGS PERTAINING TO SECTION 42-72-29.1

- There was a steady increase in staffing levels, particularly in the hiring of African American and Hispanic staff, for both residential placements and emergency shelters over the 4-year period from FY02 – FY05. In addition, comparisons of staff language capacity and the primary language spoken in the home by children and families served indicate that staff linguistic ability gradually increased to better meet the needs of families served. These findings suggest that one use of increased funding for residential and shelter programs was to enhance the cultural and linguistic diversity of staff.
- During this same period, there was also a gradual increase in meeting children's mental health needs; with a marked increase in meeting these needs in FY05.
- From FY02 – FY05, there were also generally positive outcomes for meeting children's educational needs. About 80 – 85 percent of children and youth in residential settings, and just over one-half of youth in shelters, met the state's minimum school attendance requirement while in care. Notably, in FY05, 80 percent of children and youth in shelters met this requirement. In addition, about 80 percent of children and youth in residential placement received a "C" or better in Math and English.
- Up to 80 percent of children and youth in residential placements and about 50 percent of children and youth in shelters are discharged to less restrictive community settings.
- In both residential placements and shelters, about 20-25 percent of children and youth exit to permanency within a given year, and about 90 percent of these exits involve a family reunification.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

- From FY02 – FY05, the number of children entering residential placements was relatively stable, ranging from 671 in FY03 to 787 in FY02. The number of children entering emergency shelters was also consistent, ranging from 666 in both FY04 and FY05 to 760 in FY02.
- Total unduplicated cases served during this period ranged from 1,021 to 1,102 for residential placements, and 729 to 814 for shelter placements.
- During FY02 – FY05 the median length of stay for residential placements was 119 days; for emergency shelter placements, 6 days.
- Males represent about two-thirds of those served in residential placements, while females represent about 60 percent of those served in emergency shelters.
- About 75-80 percent of children served in either residential settings or shelters fall between the ages of 12 – 18.
- Two-thirds of children and youth served in residential placements or shelters are white, and about one-fifth to one-sixth each are African American or Hispanic. During the 4-year period from FY02 - FY05, there was a gradual increase in the percentage of children and youth served who are persons of color.

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This report summarizes FY02 through FY05 trends and performance outcomes in contracted residential and emergency shelter services of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The period covered in this report is subsequent to the increase in funds allocated in FY01 and FY02 by the Rhode Island legislature pursuant to statute Section 42-72-29.1. Two types of contracted services are examined, residential and emergency shelter services. This report also describes placement trends and characteristics of children receiving such services, as well as information on staffing levels and relevant child and youth outcomes following residential or shelter services.

Who are the children served in residential and shelter programs?

Total unduplicated cases served from FY02 – FY05 ranged from 1,021 to 1,102 for residential placements, and 729 to 814 for shelter placements. Table 1 summarizes the gender, age, race, ethnicity, and primary language of the children served in residential placements and emergency shelters for the 4-year period from FY2 – FY05. This data is drawn from the DCYF program performance indicators. As is shown in the table, males represent about two-thirds of those served in residential placements, while females represent almost 60 percent of children and youth served in emergency shelters. In addition, about 75-80 percent of children and youth served in either residential settings or shelters fall between the ages of 12 – 18. About 52 – 66 percent of children served in these placements are white, about 13-22 percent are African American, and about 14 – 20 percent are Hispanic. During the 4-year period from FY02 - FY05, there was a gradual increase in the percentage of children and youth served who are persons of color. Although English is by far the primary language spoken in the home (ranging from 86 to 94 percent during this period), about 5 - 10 percent of children and youth reported that Spanish is the primary language spoken in the home, and another 2 - 6 percent reported other primary languages, such as Portugese, Hmong, or Khmer, spoken in the home.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Children Served in Residential and Shelter Programs

		Residential Placements				Emergency Shelters			
		FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Gender	Male	68	68	66	63	43	45	45	41
	Female	32	32	34	37	57	56	55	60
Age Range	0-5 years	1	<1	<1	<1	13	12	15	11
	6-11 years	13	10	11	9	10	14	9	11
	12-15 years	34	31	33	32	50	44	43	46
	16-18years	46	52	46	47	27	30	33	33
	19 + years	6	7	10	11	0	0	0	<1
Race	Asian/Pacific Islander	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	3
	Biracial	6	7	8	6	7	7	7	6
	Caucasian/White	66	64	59	56	64	55	52	54
	Unknown/Other	8	1	<1	9	14	3	<1	21
Ethnicity	Hispanic	14	15	15	17	18	20	17	17
Primary Language Spoken at Home	English	86	86	87	88	90	94	88	88
	Spanish	9	10	10	9	7	5	8	9
	Other	4	5	5	4	2	3	6	6

Figure 1 depicts the unduplicated count of the number of children entering placements in residential settings (e.g., residential placements, supervised apartments, etc.) and emergency shelters from FY02 to FY05. Data are drawn from the Rhode Island Child Health Information System (RICHIST). As is shown, the number of children entering residential placements was relatively stable, ranging from 671 in FY03 to 787 in FY02. The number of children entering emergency

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shelters varied slightly, ranging from 666 in both FY04 and FY05 to 760 in FY02. The median length of stay was 119 and 6 days for residential and shelter placements, respectively.

What are the characteristics of staff in residential and shelter programs?

Table 2 summarizes staffing data from the DCYF program performance indicators. As is shown, there was an increase in staff for both residential placements and emergency shelters over the 4-year period from FY02 – FY05. Beginning in FY02, there were 437 full time equivalent (FTE) residential staff and 87 FTE emergency shelter staff. By FY05, residential placements reported 639 FTE staff, and emergency shelters reported 166 FTE staff. The staff data also showed that there was a gradual increase in the hiring of minority staff, particularly African American and Hispanic staff, during this time. By FY05, 26 and 41 percent of staff in residential placements and shelters, respectively, were African American, and 6 and 14 percent, respectively, were Hispanic. Slight increases were also observed in staff linguistic ability over time. For residential placements in FY02 - FY04, the percentage of staff that could speak Spanish was slightly less (by about 2-4%) than the percentage of children and families who reported that Spanish was the primary language spoken in the home. By FY05, this discrepancy was down to 1 percent. For emergency shelters, the percentage of staff able to speak Spanish consistently matched or exceeded the percentage of children or families who reported Spanish as the primary language spoken at home. These findings suggest that one use of the increased funds was to enhance the cultural and linguistic diversity of staff in both programs.

Figure 1. Number of Children Entering Placement by Year

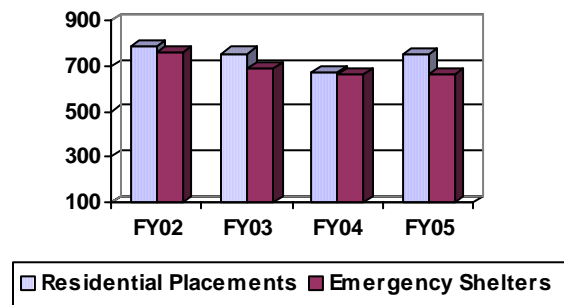


Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Staff in Residential and Shelter Programs

	Residential Placements				Emergency Shelters			
	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05
N								
Overall	542	605	720	782	123	117	188	217
FTE	437	473	571	639	87	91	148	166
%								
Race								
African American/Black	22	22	26	26	24	34	39	41
American Indian/Native American	0	<1	<1	<1	0	0	0	<1
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	<1	<1	1	0	0	<1	2
Biracial	2	1	2	2	1	<1	<1	<1
Caucasian/White	68	69	67	62	52	52	49	42
Unknown/Other	7	5	5	9	23	14	11	15
Ethnicity								
Hispanic	4	4	6	6	10	10	13	14
Linguistic Ability								
Spanish	7	6	7	8	10	14	15	13
Portuguese	4	3	3	3	4	4	5	3
Other	9	7	10	12	13	15	16	24

What happens to children once they are discharged from residential and shelter programs?

Figures 2 (residential placements) and 3 (emergency shelters) show the status of children and youth at discharge. As is shown in Figure 2, by the end of a given year, more than half of all youth in residential settings remain in their current

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placement, and about one-fifth change their placement within the system of care. In addition, about another 20 percent of youth exit the system to permanency. About 90 percent of such exits involve a family reunification, while the remainder include: living with relatives, guardianship, or adoption. About 5 percent of youth are discharged after being absent without an authorized leave from care (AWOL). Discharge outcomes for residential placements are relatively stable over time.

Figure 2. Placement Status of Children and Youth Discharged from Residential Placements

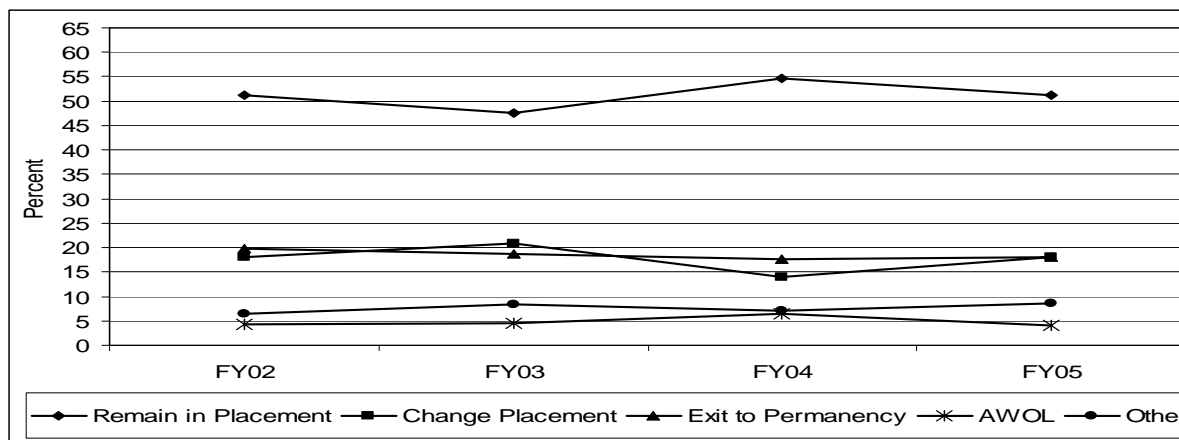
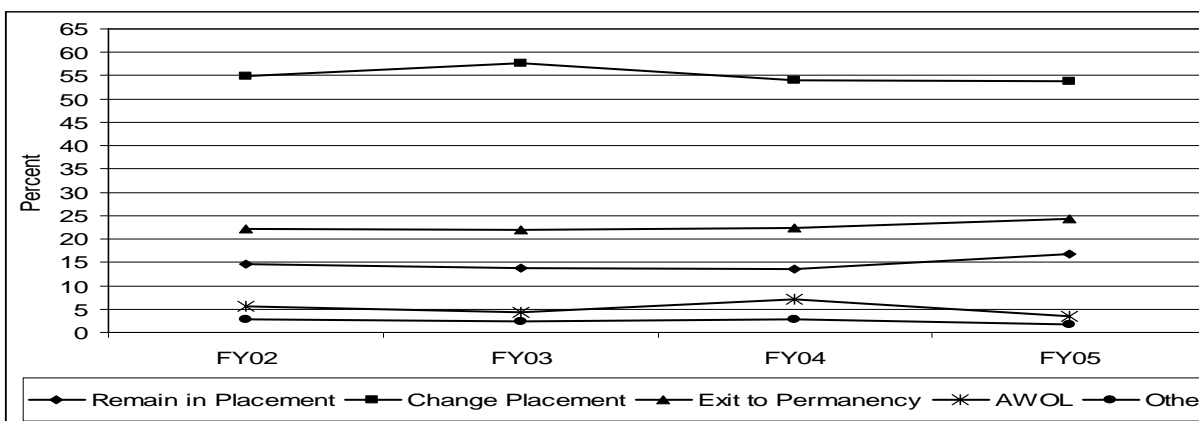


Figure 3 depicts the discharge status of children and youth from emergency shelters. Due to the shorter lengths of stay in shelters, only about 15 percent of children and youth remain in placement at the end of the calendar year. However, more than half of these youth change placements at discharge, and about 20-25 percent exit to permanency. Once again, about 90 percent of these children and youth are reunified with their family. As was the case for residential placements, about 5 percent of youth are discharged from shelters after being AWOL. These outcomes have also been relatively stable over time, although exits to permanency have increased slightly since FY02.

Figure 3. Placement Status of Children and Youth Discharged from Emergency Shelters



To what extent are children and youth discharged to more or less restrictive settings?

Another way to capture the quality of discharge outcomes following residential or shelter placement is to classify discharge settings by their level of restrictiveness. For example, for a child in a group home, discharge to a foster home represents a less restrictive setting, whereas discharge to an institution is more restrictive. Similar classifications can be made for emergency shelter placements. Ideally, one objective of a successful residential or shelter placement is to discharge a child to a less restrictive setting, although more intensive and/or restrictive levels of care may be necessary to meet the needs of some children or youth. Figures 4 and 5 summarize the level of restrictiveness of discharge placement settings for children leaving residential placements or emergency shelters, respectively. As is shown in Figure 4, about

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58 – 82 percent of discharges from residential placements are to less restrictive placements, and about 8 – 19 percent are to more restrictive placements. About 10 – 24 percent are to settings that are neither more nor less restrictive. These outcomes usually represent a transfer to another similar setting. Figure 5 depicts the findings on this performance indicator for emergency shelters. About 40 – 52 percent of shelter placements at discharge are to less restrictive placements, and about 21 – 26 percent of discharges are to more restrictive placements. In addition, about 22 - 38 percent of discharges are to settings that are neither more nor less restrictive, but represent a transfer to another similar setting or a discharge to setting with about the same level of restrictiveness. The lower percentage of discharges by shelter programs to less restrictive settings reflects the unique role of shelters in the system of care – to provide crisis stabilization, assessment, and referral to determine the most appropriate setting for the child's next placement.

Figure 4. Restrictiveness of Residential Discharge Placements by Year

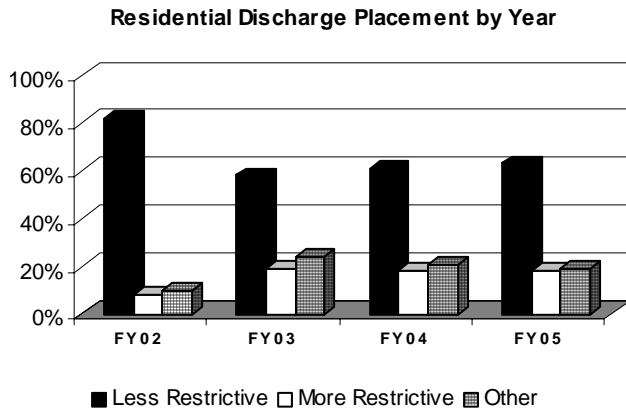
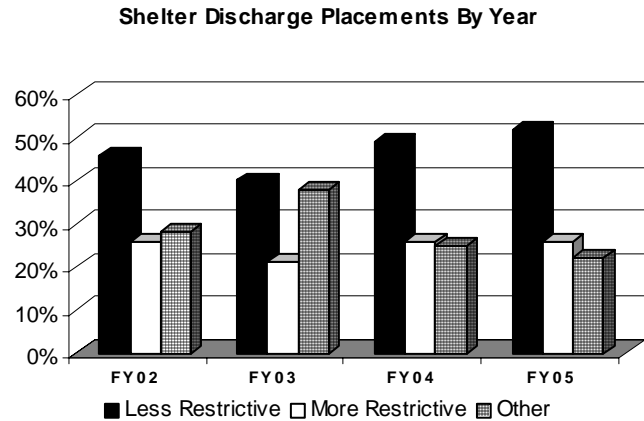


Figure 5. Restrictiveness of Shelter Discharge Placements by Year



What percent of children in residential and shelter programs have mental health needs, and to what extent are these needs addressed?

Both residential and shelter staff assess whether the children or youth being served have mental health needs, whether those needs are being met through the receipt of mental health services, and what percent of perceived unmet mental health service needs still are not being met. Data from the DCYF performance indicators and shown in Tables 3 and 4 summarize these findings. As is shown in Table 3, about 75 – 89 percent of children in residential placement have some type of identified mental health need. Of this group, about 90 – 95 percent of children and youth receive mental health services to address this need. Of those children with mental health service needs, about 8-9 percent still have an unmet service need that is not being addressed by the mental health services provided (e.g., there may be a need for family therapy but this may not be taking place even though individual treatment is being provided, etc.). Since FY02, slightly higher percentages of children have been identified as having mental health needs, and higher percentages of children and youth are reported as receiving mental health services.

Table 3. Percent of Children in Residential Placement Needing Mental Health Services, Receiving Services, and with Unmet Service Needs, by Year

	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05
Percent of children with identified need for mental health services	75	87	87	89
Of those who need them, what percent are receiving mental health services?	90	94	94	95
Of those who need them, what percent have an unmet service need?	9	8	8	8

Note: Column totals may differ from 100% due to missing data, or because children may both receive services and still have an unmet need for additional services.

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Table 4 summarizes data from emergency shelters regarding mental health services and needs. As shown in the table, the number of children identified as needing mental health services ranged from 55 – 61 percent during the 4-year period. Of those children and youth, about 80 – 92 percent receive mental health services. This percentage is lower than that found for children in residential placement, and may be due to the shorter time for assessment and treatment engagement available in emergency shelters. In addition, of those children with mental health service needs, about 14 – 30 percent still have an unmet service need not being addressed by the services provided. For some youth, this may be the result of having insufficient time for engagement in mental health services, for others it may be due to the limited capacity among emergency shelter programs to address a range of mental health needs even if some are being addressed through various forms of brief treatment. The only marked shift since FY02 is the increased percentage of children receiving mental health services in shelters in FY05, and the concomitant decreased percentage with unmet mental health needs.

Table 4. Percent of Children in Shelters Needing Mental Health Services, Receiving Services, and with Unmet Service Needs, by Year

	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05
Percent of children with identified need for mental health services	55	61	56	56
Of those who need them, what percent are receiving mental health services?	82	80	83	92
Of those who need them, what percent have an unmet service need?	18	30	28	14

Note: Column totals may differ from 100% due to missing data, or because children may both receive services and still have an unmet need for additional services.

What is the school performance of children who receive residential and shelter services?

Children and youth in residential placement have opportunities for continued education through the residential setting or in conjunction with other school settings. Such opportunities are limited in emergency shelters due to the brief average length of stay. Table 5 summarizes data from the DCYF performance indicators of the percent of children and youth in residential placement and emergency shelters who attend school on a regular basis – that is, at least 75 percent of the time – Rhode Island’s minimum requirement for a child to receive a passing grade. As shown in the table, about 80 – 85 percent of children in youth in residential settings meet the state’s minimum attendance requirement. Data from FY02 – FY04 indicated that just over one-half of children in shelters attended school regularly, although this percentage increased dramatically in FY05 to 82 percent.

Table 5. Percent of School Attendance for Children and Youth in Residential and Shelter Placement by Year

	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05
Percent of children in residential placement who attended school on a regular basis (75% or more of the time)	80	81	82	85
Percent of children in emergency shelters who attended school on a regular basis (75% or more of the time)	53	51	56	82

Note: Column totals may differ from 100% due to missing data, or because children may both receive services and still have an unmet need for additional services.

Since the median average length of stay in emergency shelters is about 6 days, providers do not collect data on school grades as part of their performance indicator assessment for DCYF. However, such data must be collected and reported by residential providers. Table 6 summarizes the percent of children and youth in residential placement with school grades of “C” or better in Math and English. As shown in the table, about 80 percent of children and youth in residential placement receive a “C” or better in both core subjects. This generally satisfactory performance may be attributed to

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several factors. First, residential settings have an abiding commitment to schooling for children in placement. Second, most children have improved attendance at school while in residential placement due to the staff support available in the setting. This enables many children and youth to receive a passing grade, in part, because they have attended school on a regular basis. And third, for many children and youth who may have had academic difficulties prior to residential placement, the residential setting provides an opportunity for more individualized educational attention than may have been possible prior to placement. Examination of the school performance data for children and youth across the 4-year period shows steady progress toward attaining educational outcomes, particularly in FY05.

Table 6. Percent of Children and Youth in Residential Placement with School Grades of “C” or Better in Math and English by Year

	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05
Percent of children with a grade of “C” or better for Math	79	81	81	81
Percent of children with a grade of “C” or better for English	78	80	82	85

Note: Column totals may differ from 100% due to missing data, or because children may both receive services and still have an unmet need for additional services.